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For Schools That Work!
Ron Ottinger '96
SAN DIEGO SCHOOL BOARD

Paid for by Ottinger for School Board '96, Crosby Milne, Treasurer, ID # 950665

Campaign REPORTER

Vol. 2, No. 1 November 1995

If the nation takes care of its children, the children will grow to take care of the nation

March 26 Primary Election Critical to School Reform Effort

School Board President Ron Ottinger starts strong in '96 re-election campaign

– Bid for 2nd term garners over 200 key early endorsements
– Campaign contributions exceed $15,000

We're off to a great start. School Board President Ron Ottinger's drive for re-election to the San Diego Unified School Board is receiving terrific support during the first few months of the campaign.

To date we have raised $15,000, half our goal of $30,000 for the primary. And we have garnered over 200 endorsements from parent, education, business, labor, religious, ethnic and neighborhood leadership.

Of course a quick start is necessary this year. California's primary election date has been moved up to March 26, the earliest date in history.

Fortunately, Ron has a great record to run on. Ron has reduced class size, co-authored one of the nation's first zero tolerance policies against weapons and violence, and championed strong academic standards, accountability, parent involvement, charter schools and school-to-career education.

Because Ron has challenged the status quo, we expect a well-funded candidate to file against him. That's why strong early support is essential.

San Diego Unified School District is the seventh largest urban school district in the country and the second largest in California. Over 128,000 students attend 156 schools. There are more than 6000 teachers and 12,000 total employees. The Board oversees a budget of over 600 million dollars.

The trustee for District D will be the victor of a two stage election process which begins with a March, 1996 district only primary and concludes with a November, 1996 city-wide runoff between the top two vote getters of the primary.

District D is the Mid-City district which encompasses the communities of Burlingame, Centre City, City Heights, East San Diego, Golden Hill, Hillcrest, Kensington, Little Italy, Logan Heights, Normal Heights, North Park, Sherman Heights, South Park, Southcrest, and University Heights.. □

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

✓ Send in your endorsement card.

✓ Make a contribution

✓ Sign Ron's nomination petition

JOIN US
Saturday, December 9th
8am - 3pm

Official Signature Gathering Campaign Kickoff

4205 Ridgeway Drive, Kensington
(Ottinger Family Home)

Information: 584-8250

Commentary by Ron Ottinger

Lower class size to improve student reading

Lou Ann Johnson, the inspirational inner city schoolteacher and ex-Marine portrayed by Michele Pfeiffer in the film Dangerous Minds, said, "When classes are small enough to allow individual teacher-student interaction, a minor miracle occurs: teachers teach and students learn."

California's classes are the largest in the nation. First grade classes in California typically have 30 students. Next door, in Nevada, they average 15.

If we are serious about improving student learning, particularly in the critical elementary grades, we have to lower class size.

Students learn to read in the first grade. It is much easier to teach a class of 15 students to read than a class of 30.

State Superintendent Delaine Eastin calls reading "the quintessential academic skill—students need to learn to read in order to be able to read to learn."

Think of the skills students need to learn in order to become good readers. They need to learn how to sound out words. They need to be able to figure out the meaning of words in context. They need to learn comprehension skills (it's possible to sound out all the words in a sentence without understanding the meaning). Students need to learn many different reading strategies, so when one strategy doesn't work with a particular word or phrase they can try another. They need constant exposure to literature because quality children's literature is fun and fuels the imagination. Most of all, they need to practice, practice, practice. When reading becomes effortless, it becomes enjoyable.

Effective reading instruction requires an individual and small group focus, otherwise the miracle Lou Ann Johnson talks about may not occur. You can't teach reading like you teach physical education—to large numbers of students simultaneously.

Students need more help than ever before. There are many reasons for this: the prevalence of television and video games; more parents working longer hours; fewer two-parent families; and the large percentage of students who speak a language other than English at home. But whatever the reason, the conclusion is inescapable. Schools need to do more.

If we are asking teachers to provide more individual help per student, we cannot keep increasing the number of students.

The California Reading Task Force, co-chaired by San Diegans Bertha Pendleton and Bill Lynch, concluded: "Research has shown that class size of less than 20 students in the early primary grades and frequent student-teacher interaction are optimum conditions for effective reading instruction. Every effort should be made to realign staffing patterns to create smaller

See "Reading" on other side

Class Size, School Safety, Academics, Accountability — Ron Shows How to Make Schools Work!

Other candidates will tell you what they support. Ron can point to what he has accomplished.

✔ Smaller Class Size

Ron wrote San Diego Unified's "Classrooms First" policy, which reduced class size from 30 to 25 students in grades 1 and 2 and created 123 new teaching positions.

✔ Shifting Resources to the Classroom

Ron's "Classrooms First" policy shifted $6.2 million back to the classroom, the largest reallocation of resources in district history.

✔ Zero Tolerance

Ron co-authored one of the nation's first "zero-tolerance" policies against weapons and violence. Ron recognizes that strict but fair discipline policies help teachers teach and students learn.

✔ Reading

Ron has been a partner in the district's effort to place strong emphasis on reading skills. The Reading Recovery program has brought over 80% of first grade problem readers up to the average level of their class in 12 to 20 weeks of instruction.

✔ Accountability

Ron has championed school accountability standards linked to student achievement, proposing a seven-point accountability plan supported in an October 27, 1995 *San Diego Union-Tribune* editorial.

✔ School Facilities

Ron has worked hard to relieve school overcrowding. He has brought the community into the school planning process. A major effort is underway, supported by AmeriCorp volunteers, to design a modernization master plan for every school. It will cover technology, class size, school size needs, and deferred maintenance needs.

Reading *(Continued)*

classes."

Delaine Eastin agrees, saying "research shows that class size does affect learning, especially in the primary grades...[I will] sponsor legislation for a school bond to reduce class sizes to 20 students in grades kindergarten through three. We simply must improve the basic skills children receive."

San Diego City Schools pioneered smaller classes using existing resources in 1994. Based on the "Classrooms First" policy I authored, an historic reallocation of $6.2 million was directed to class size reduction. Passed by a 3-2 vote, with Ann Armstrong and Shirley Weber joining me in voting yes, phase one of the plan reduced class size from 30 to 25 students per class in grades 1 and 2 and created 123 new teaching positions.

Teachers with smaller classes across the district have been able to move from crowd control to quality control. Edison elementary teacher Marietta Norman, commenting on the value of smaller classes, told the San Diego Union-Tribune, "I am able to see right way who is having problems and who is not."

To further reduce class size in San Diego City Schools, we will need to add classrooms. To oversee this process, a districtwide Facilities Steering Committee has been formed to develop modernization master plans for each of the district's 156 schools. In addition to confronting a severe maintenance backlog and school overcrowding, the Facilities Steering Committee and its five Local Area Planning Groups will consider space needs for further class size reduction.

PLEASE SEND IN YOUR ENDORSEMENT CARD OR CONTRIBUTION TODAY!
Information: 584-8250

Where will the money come from? One possibility is the state bond proposal put forward by Delaine Eastin. Another possibility is to give San Diego voters the chance to approve local bonds for class size reduction. Either way, children would be the real winners.

If you are interested in volunteering to participate on the Class Size Reduction Task Force with other parents, teachers, and principals, please contact me at my school board office by calling 293-8056.□

Calendar

December 4th – 29th

Signature Gathering to Qualify Candidate for the Ballot

✔✔✔ December 9th, Saturday, 8am -3pm

Volunteer Meeting and Signature Gathering Drive

At Campaign Headquarters

4205 Ridgeway Drive, Kensington

March 26th, Tuesday, 7 AM- 8 PM

Primary Election Day

For Schools That Work!

Ron '96 Ottinger
SAN DIEGO SCHOOL BOARD

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